

Ballarat Naturalist



Trailing Goodenia
Goodenia lanata
(Club Logo)

Enhancing woolgrowers' environmental performance

Speaker: Peter Hanrahan

Peter began with the recitation of an adapted short modern version of "*Said Hanrahan*" This Hanrahan, Peter, is an optimistic agricultural scientist with seven years of training, followed by 25 years as an extension officer for wool growers - a technologist. Next he had ten years as a program manager during which time the work brought about his development as a social scientist which he believes was a beneficial and necessary change for his work then and in the next phase of his career. "The following words are now important to me: *Communication is message received rather than message given.*"

Peter is now a consultant who works for both *Australian Wool Innovation* and *Land and Water Australia*. The Research program in which he is involved is known as *Land Water and Wool*. It development originated when the *Australian Wool Innovation* asked *Land and Water Australia* to manage an environmental project on their behalf with \$20 million over five years – funded by a 2 % levy from wool growers on wool sales. Land and Water Australia is a Federal Government research organisation related to waterways, irrigation, native vegetation, climate change and salinity.

The primary objectives of the program, as outlined on the website are to:

- Identify key natural resource management issues for the wool industry through better understanding of producers' perceptions, need, priorities and practices.
- Increase wool producers' awareness and motivation to tackle natural resource management issues
- Provide wool producers with information and practical tools to address land management issues that affect productivity.
- Design profitable and environmentally considerate options for the management of:
 - Saline and potentially saline lands;
 - Rivers, streams and watering points;
 - Native vegetation and grazing systems



The researchers are of the highest quality including professors who are doing research in the relevant areas. Peter's rôle is to translate their research findings into a form that is more relevant to the wool growers' farming. It sounds easy, to just get out there among the growers and sell the excellent scientific messages. This issue requires a diversion here to make a point.

We were asked to consider the *pink-beaked grass-eater bird*!! The good news is that the bird has been found in a grassy area, natural to the region of 1 km around the perimeter of Lake Wendouree. The bird eats two types of grass, one on the south side and another on the north side of the Lake. There is a problem because, for the birds to survive, there needs to be a continuous grassy region around the perimeter of the Lake to connect the two regions. The Government and Council have issued an ordinance that the relevant residents will transform their backyards so that the continuous area will be formed. All fences need to be dismantled, gardens ripped out and only the special grasses planted and cared for. Of course there will be no cats or dogs allowed. Imagine this!! Will the owners of the backyards be happy?

Farmers are in a similar situation when faced with a project, though among them, there is a continuum of views. What does market research indicate about their approaches to such projects? Growers:

- ❑ are very suspicious when dealing with NRM practitioners on their farms
- ❑ unlikely to do work with cannot capture the benefits
- ❑ unlikely to be *green* if in the *red*
- ❑ worried about weeds and pest animals
- ❑ generally must be engaged by a hook of some form of productivity
- ❑ are all different-
 - 5% very *green* to the detriment of productivity
 - 5% seek profit at the exclusion of environmental concerns
 - 10% seek profit and environment issues.
 - Rest somewhere in between.

In Peter's area of concern, 5% of the wool growers are out in front and 10% are coming along on the road to participation in environmental improvements. The rest are not on the radar of the concerns, or it is low in their priorities.

Peter again reminded us: *Communication is message received rather than message given*. All need to start from where the audience is so he makes sure the program has a legacy in which:

- a portion of the growers are very receptive and engaged
- researchers put information in a form which engages the growers
- there is a place for the education of people like himself
- there is an upskilling of intermediaries, so all is ready when growers are
- policy makers are engaged.

One such example is of a pastoral project involving the DPI in Ararat. It has been found that grazing the hill country of the area for two years, at a different time of the year than is presently done, will produce a 20% increase in productivity. This only requires grazing flat country for a little longer time with no capital input. Compare this to a project of growing trees, which takes many years to produce increased productivity with a large input by growers or others.

A final issue is foresighting – 30 year's time. What about the future of the wool industry? In the next 5 years animal welfare issues need to be sorted out. The marginal areas in Australia are unlikely to be abandoned, so perhaps farmers need to be paid to stay and care for the land. Landcare has done good work but shows signs of burn-out. What place has the DPI in environmental issues? Who needs money and from where for the issues? Perhaps training of coordinators in Landcare or other environmentally concerned groups such as field naturalists' clubs is a possibility.

We were left with the question: how do we, FNC of Ballarat fit into all of this?

Editor

FNC Ballarat

Minutes of General Meeting

5 August 2005

The President welcomed 25 members and visitors

Apologies have been received from Greg and Genny Binns, Dulcie Brooke, John Gregurke, Ken and Del McDonnell, Tony Johns, Maureen Christie, Virginia Dyson.

Business Arising from correspondence: Nil

- Visit to Bushranger Reserve with Mark Angus DSE and Paul Fernando Parks Victoria to inspect possible need for ecological burn suggested by Pat Murphy in our submission to the Draft Fire Protection Plan. Pat was unavailable so John Gregurke and Carol Hall accompanied them on July 13. Variety of orchids and eucalypts pointed out to them. Fence boundaries on site did not agree with DSE map information, nor had they any familiarity with the reserve. Agreed that a burn could be done utilising a Bobcat to clear a buffer on side adjacent to paddock, but such action would depend on priorities. We informed them of Pat's plant lists for the area and would ask her to email them to Paul and Mark. An interesting and amicable morning.

General Business

- Volunteers requested: for supper duty, to write up lecture and excursion report.
- Maps available for Ned's Corner.
- Reminder that September's excursion is on the **Saturday 3rd** to Bacchus Marsh Wetlands. Afternoon at either Werribee Gorge or Lerderberg Gorge – Committee to finalise this.
- JG was contacted re a possible plant/bird survey on private land near Clarksdale – will follow up.

Show and Tell

- Claire Dalman: Specimen of eucalypt from Mallacoota, result of windstorm; only 36 of these trees exist *E. globulus* ssp. *pseudoglobulus* x *E. cypellocarpa* "Mallacoota Gum".
- Helen Burgess: article from *The Age* 3-8-05 on Ecuadorian bird species Club-winged Manakin which rubs its wings together at 100 beats/second to "sing".
- Lyndsay Fink: photos of recent visit to New Caledonia where eucalypts grow, various *Araucaria* sp., wattles, and nickel resources.

Field Reports

- C. Hall: Mid-July - 40 Freckled Duck on Lake Wendouree, Masked Lapwing chicks near silt trap; at Mildura, White-breasted Sea Eagle and Little Friarbird at sewage ponds; at Ouyen Major Mitchell Cockatoos feeding on pine cones.
- Claire & Peter Dalman: late July 6 Lyrebirds at Minnamurra NSW.
- F. Hanrahan: SMB Lydiard St – pair of Masked Lapwings on lawn have eggs.
- J. Mildren: mid July – Caspian Tern diving for food opposite Lake Lodge (now Pipers on the Parade); Freckled Duck at start of rowing course; Masked Lapwing and chick at Nazareth House.
- Paul Norquay: Nodding Greenhoods at Mt. Egerton – very few this year and late flowering. Thornbills collecting nesting material.
- Pat Murphy: Central Victoria – *Acacia pycnantha* (Golden Wattle) has begun flowering a month later than usual this year.
- Bryan Hanrahan: at Buninyong, Masked Lapwing nesting.

Excursion arrangements – P. Dalman: Trust for Nature Block at Linton – clean-up and survey.

Supper.

This month's quiz questions - obtained by Lindsay Fink from: *The sixth catastrophe* by Richard Leakey. (Answers on page 7.)

1. What appeared on the Earth 3.5 billion years ago?
2. What is the largest group of living animals?
3. What is thought to be the smell of the first flowers?

Excursion: Linton Nature Reserve – Sunday 7th August 2005

Leader: Peter Dalman

The Linton Nature Reserve was visited for the dual purpose of reviewing the condition of the property and looking at the natural environment. Ten members attended the excursion.

On the Glenelg Highway heading to Linton just past the turnoff to Cape Clear is a patch of Snow gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) on both sides of the road. We stopped for a quick look and noted that there are now “Significant roadside vegetation” signs and that the trees are identified. Their parallel leaf veins were noted.

The Linton Nature Reserve is a Trust for Nature property located on the south side of Glenelg Highway just past Linton. Locally it is sometimes referred to as the “92 mile block” as it is located at this point on the highway. The entrance is at the west end with parking space for a few cars in front of a locked gate. There is no signage to indicate the status of the land.



Lunch at gates of the Nature Reserve

The Trust for Nature website says the block was purchased in 1975 with a grant and locally raised funds after the land was to be subdivided. The block is significant because it is a large forest remnant with flora consisting mostly of Red Stringybark and Narrow-leaf Peppermint forest on sedimentary deposits from the Quaternary period, mostly flood plains and alluvium terraces. The property is said to support a good diversity of birds, possums and bats. The website acknowledged the Ballarat Field Naturalists Club as responsible for the local management of the reserve.



At this time of the year the block seemed in generally good condition with only one patch of gorse near the west boundary, a briar rose and one Cootamundra wattle, all of which were removed or growth discouraged. There were a few branches over the western boundary fence that were also removed. This fence is in comparatively poor condition but still serviceable. Fences on the northern and southern boundaries are still in excellent condition. Our club organised replacement with a 1988 bicentennial grant. Evidence of rabbits was observed but not extensive.

Job well done –branch cut away from fence

Pat Murphy provided a plant list with 128 species. Plants that were in flower or bud were noted. In particular the following were seen: Gold dust wattle (*Acacia acinacea*), Prostrate wattle (*Acacia aculeatissima*), Common correa (*Correa reflexa* var. *reflexa*), Black anther flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta* var. *revoluta*), Scented sundew (*Drosera whittakeri*), Scentbark (*Eucalyptus aromaphloia* subsp. *aromaphloia*), Common hovea (*Hovea heterophylla*), Common beard heath (*Leucopogon virgatus* var. *virgatus*), Peach heath (*Lissanthe strigosa* subsp. *coriacea*), Nodding greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*), Tiny greenhood (*Pterostylis parviflora*), and Dwarf greenhood (*Pterostylis nanna*). Some of the correa plants were very impressive, their vivid scarlet flowers brightening the winter bush beautifully.



A patch of Nodding greenhoods

Most birds observed were on the margin between the block and adjacent farmland. Birds observed included the Tree martin, Fairy wren, Yellow robin, Red robin and a Wedge tailed eagle. A ring-tailed possum was also seen.

Les Hanrahan noted the fungi and said the most common fungi seen at the reserve were *Tricholoma eucalypticum*. These fungi have a biscuit-coloured cap up to 12cm in diameter with white sinuate gills that are closely spaced. One group of these fungi were seen growing in a ring two metres across. A White Punk fungus was seen high up on a tree. An Elephant's Foot-bracket fungus was noticed on a tree trunk and several small white *Crepidotus variabilis* clung to a fallen log. Yellow and Brown Belly Button species were seen among moss and algae. The well-named Slimy Yellow Cortinar and old specimens of the Emperor and Elegant Blue Cortinars were noticed on the ground. Other species noted included the Hedgehog fungus that has teeth instead of gills or pores, Puffballs, *Calvatia* sp., *Laccaria* sp., the Buttercap and an *Enteloma*. The *Enteloma*'s cap and stem were nearly black and gills were white.

The full fungi list was:

Hedgehog Fungi - *Hydnum repandu*

Brown Belly Button - *Omphalina umbellifera*,

White Punk - *Laetiporus portentosus*

Rainbow fungi - *Trametes versicolor*

Emperor Cortinar - *Cortinarius archeri*,

Yellow Belly Button,- *Omphalina chromacea*, *Laccaria* sp.

Elegant Blue Cortinar - *Cortinarius rotundisporus*,

Slimy Yellow Cortinar - *Cortinarius sinapicolor*,

Buttercap *Rhodocollybia* aff. *butyracea*

Tricholoma eucalypticum,

Enteloma sp.

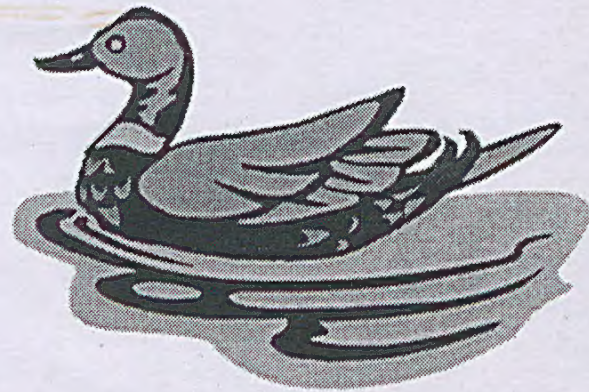
Puffball- *Calvatia* sp. –

Elephant's Foot' - *Phellinus* sp

Crepidotus variabilis

Helen's Archive Gems

Whilst sorting through some papers recently, Helen Burgess came across the following notes. However, she is not sure where this information originated.



James Oddie and Birds.

1863 Acclimatisation Society formed to bring out British Birds to Ballarat.

26/6 3 pair skylarks released.

24/7 pair White Swans released at Lake Wendouree. Wild turkeys, pheasants and Chinese ducks released at lakeside.

1864 9/7 Society imported and set free in Sturt St. 12 "dear little sparrows".

1879 CHJ Walker – generous gift of 20 blackbirds and thrushes to Trustees of Botanic Gardens. He took a cabin for them on the ship; he and his daughter looked after them; cost 100 guineas (procuring and transporting).

1874 Several Black Swans given to Lake; 4 White Swans brought out by Cpt. Tomlin.

1887 James Oddie – songs of Blackbirds, thrushes, "gay presence of goldfinches and starlings" sent over from New Zealand.

Mr. Toup, curator of the Gardens personally reared 82 blackbirds and thrushes. Mr. Chas Somers of Rome gave 4 White Swans from Rome - 2 dead.

1934 8 White Swans living at the Lake.

Carol Hall

Answers to Quiz Questions on page 4.

1. The first single-celled organism appeared about 3.5 million years ago.
2. The largest group of organisms are the Coleoptera Beetles with 290 000 found throughout the world.
3. The smell of the first flowers is thought to be of rotten flesh and dung to attract beetles and flies.

Calendar

September

- Fri. 2 *Shari Wallis*
Soils by ~~Troy~~ Clarkson, Soil Scientist D.P.I.
*Sat. 3 Excursion: *Bacchus Marsh Wetlands and Werribee Gorge*, Leader: F Hanrahan
17, 18th *Angair Wildflower Show*, Memorial Hall McMillan St., Anglesea
Tues 27th Committee Meeting 7.30 pm at Pat Murphy's
30Sept-2 Oct Birds Australia Annual Congress in Bendigo

October

- Fri. 7 Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture: *Otway Dreaming - Vision for a Natural Park*,
by Trevor Prescott, Geelong FNC
Sun. 9 Excursion: Enfield State Park, Leaders: Pat and Bill Murphy
14-18th SEANA Campout at Mallacoota Hosted by Sale and District FNC

Supper duty:	September:	October:
Note-taker	September:	October:

Committee

President Mr. Peter Dalman
Vice-President Mr. Greg Binns
Secretary Mrs. Carol Hall
Treasurer Mr. Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess
Miss Maureen Christie
Mrs. Claire Dalman
Mr. John Gregurke.
Ms Fran Hanrahan (Editor)
Mrs. Pat Murphy

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Meetings are held at the Ballarat Horticultural Centre, cnr. Gregory & Gillies Sts (VicRoads 254 F8) on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: Depart from Ballarat Market Place (formerly Creswick Plaza) Creswick Rd., Ballarat (VicRoads 255 M10) at 9.30 am unless otherwise specified.

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